AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Kindly amend the claims as indicated in the attached Appendix A commencing on page 4.

REMARKS

Applicants acknowledge the allowance of claims 5 and 8-10. Claim 1 has been canceled, mooting the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112 ¶1 and §102(e). With regard to the rejections of Claim 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, ¶¶ 1 and 2 Applicants traverse the rejections and request reconsideration in light of the amendments to claim 6 and the arguments presented below.

The Examiner has stated alternatively that Applicants have not provided support for the treatment of an ozone-containing gas and it is unclear how the method of purifying crude acetic anhydride relates to the treatment of ozone–containing gas. Applicants respectfully disagree. Applicants have invented a novel and unobvious method of decreasing diketene concentration included in crude acetic anhydride by dissolving diketene using ozonization treatment. This is clearly disclosed in the specification at page 4, line 10 "Such a method of producing acetic anhydride is not particularly restricted, and acetic acid obtained by effecting ozonization treatment on crude acetic acid then distilling the ozonized product can be used. By such purification treatment, crude acetic anhydride having a diketene concentration of about 5 ppm can be obtained." Applicants respectfully suggest that Applicant has met its burden under 35 U.S.C. §112 ¶¶ 1 and 2.

The Examiner further rejected claim 6 under §112 ¶1 stating that although the specification is enabling for methods of purifying acetic anhydride containing diketenes it does not reasonably provide enablement for method of purifying acetic anhydride containing "ketene". Claim 6, as amended, provides for a method of purifying acetic anhydride containing diketenes.

Conclusion

Applicant submit that with the arguments and amendments presented herein all pending claims are allowable over the art of record, for at least the reasons discussed above, and respectfully requests that a Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

If the Examiner believes that a teleconference would be of value in expediting the allowance of the pending claims, the undersigned can be reached at the telephone number listed below. This response has been filed within the three-month statutory time for response and it is, therefore, believed that no petition or payment for extension of fees is due. If, however, it is believed that any additional fees are necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge or credit any such fees or overpayment to Deposit Account No. (Reference #60586-300501).

Dated: August 9, 2004

Respectfully submitted,

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APPENDIX A - CLAIM AMENDMENTS
Serial No.: 09/788,047
Docket No.: 60586-300501

Claims 1-4 (Cancelled)

5. (Previously Amended) A method of purifying crude acetic anhydride wherein treatment with an ozone–containing gas is conducted after distilling acetic anhydride containing diketenes.

6. (Currently amended) A method of producing polyoxytetramethylene glycol by ring-opening polymerization of tetrahydrofuran in the presence of ~~the~~ acetic anhydride and an acid catalyst, comprising:

purifying said acetic anhydride by treatment of an ozone-containing gas after distilling crude acetic anhydride containing ~~ketenes~~ diketenes;

conducting the ring-opening-polymerization with said purified acetic anhydride and said acid catalyst.

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Currently Amended) A method of purifying crude acetic anhydride as recited in claim 5 wherein said purified crude acetic anhydride, after performing a heat treatment of between 80 and 120 degrees Celsius for at least 5 hours, has a hue value of 10 ~~ALPHA~~ APHA units or less subsequent to a sulfuric acid coloring test.

9. (Previously Added) A method of purifying crude acetic anhydride as recited in claim 5 wherein said purified crude acetic anhydride has a diketene concentration below 2 ppm.

10. (Previously Added) A method of purifying crude acetic anhydride as recited in claim 8 wherein said purified crude acetic anhydride has a diketene concentration below 2 ppm.